

Thou hast not writen hir sin that she wente,
Nor she to thee, and this I dorste leye,
Ther may swich cause been in hir entente,
That hardely thou wolt thyselfen seye,
That hir abood the beste is for yow tweye.
Now wryte hir thanne, and thou shalt fele sone
As sothe of al; ther is no more to done.

Acorded been to this conclusioun,
And that anon, thise ilke lordes two;
And hastely sit Troilus adoun,
And rolleth in his herte to and fro,
How he may best discryven hir his wo.
And to Criseyde, his owene lady dere,
He wroot right thus, and seyde as ye may here.

Right fresshe flour, whos I have been and shal,
Withouthen part of elleswhere servyse,
With herte, body, lyf, lust, thought, and al;
I woful wight, in every humble wyse
That tonge telle or herte may devyse,
As ofte as matere occupyeth place,
Me recomaunde unto your noble grace.

Lyketh it yow to witen, swete herte,
As ye wel knowe how longe tyme agoon
That ye me laste in aspre peynes smerte,
Whan that ye wente, of which yet bote noon
Have I non had, but ever wers bigoon
fro day to day am I, and so mot dwelle,
While it yow list, of wele and wo my welle!

for which to yow, with dredful herte trewe,
I wryte, as he that sorwe dryfth to wryte,
My wo, that every houre encreseth newe,
Compleynynge as I dar or can endyte.
And that defaced is, that may ye wyte
The teres, which that fro myn eyen reyne,
That wolde speke, if that they coude, and pleyne.

Yow first biseche I, that your eyen clere
To look on this defouled ye not holde;
And over al this, that ye, my lady dere,
Wol vouchesauf this lettre to biholde.
And by the cause eek of my cares colde,
That sleeth my wit, if ought amis me asterte,
foryeve it me, myn owene swete herte.

If any servant dorste or oughte of right
Upon his lady pitously compleyne,
Than wene I, that ich oughte be that wight,
Considered this, that ye these monthes tweyne
han taried, ther ye seyden, sooth to seyne,
But dayes ten ye nolde in ost sojourne,
But in two monthes yet ye not retourne.

But forasmuche as me mot nedes lyke
Al that yow list, I dar not pleyne more,
But humbely with sorwful sykes syke;
Yow wryte ich myn unresty sorwes sore,
fro day to day desyring evermore
To knowen fully, if your wil it were,
How ye han ferd and doon, whyl ye be there.

The whos welfare and hele eek God encesse
In honour swich, that upward in degre
It growe alwey, so that it never cesse;
Right as your herte ay can, my lady free,
Devyse, I prey to God so mote it be.
And graunte it that ye sone upon me rewe
As wisly as in al I am yow trewe.

And if yow lyketh knownen of the fare
Of me, whos wo ther may no wight discryve,
I can no more but, cheste of every care,
At wrytinge of this lettre I was onlyve,
At redy out my woful gost to dryve;
Which I delaye, and holde him yet in honde,
Upon the sight of matere of your sonde.

Myn eyen two, in veyn with which I see,
Of sorwful teres salte am waxen welles;
My song, in pleynte of myn adversitee;
My good, in harm; myn ese eek waxen helle is.
My joye, in wo; I can sey yow nought elles,
But turned is, for which my lyf I warie,
Everich joye or ese in his contrarie.

Which with your cominge hoom ayein to Troye
Ye may redresse, and, more a thousand sythe
Than ever ich hadde, encressen in me joye.
for was ther never herte yet so blythe
To han his lyf, as I shal been as swythe
As I yow see; and, though no maner routhe
Commeve yow, yet thinketh on your trouthe.

And if so be my gilt hath deeth deserved,
Or if you list no more upon me see,
In guerdon yet of that I have you served,
Biseche I yow, myn hertes lady free,
That hereupon ye wolden wryte me,
for love of God, my righte lode/sterre,
Ther deeth may make an ende of al my werre.

If other cause aught doth yow for to dwelle,
That with your lettre ye me recomforte;
for though to me your absence is an helle,
With patience I wol my wo comporte.
And with your lettre of hope I wol desporte.
Now wryteth, swete, and lat me thus not pleyne;
With hope, or deeth, delivereth me fro payne.

Ywis, myn owene dere herte trewe,
I woot that, whan ye next upon me see,
So lost have I myn hele and eek myn bewe,
Criseyde shal nought conne knowe me!
Ywis, myn hertes day, my lady free,
So thursteth ay myn herte to biholde
Your beautee, that my lyf unneth I holde.

I sey no more, al have I for to seye
To you wel more than I telle may;
But whether that ye do me live or deye,
Yet pray I God, so yeve yow right good day.
And fareth wel, goodly fayre fresshe may,
As ye that lyf or deeth me may comaunde;
And to your trouthe ay I me recomaunde

With hele swich that, but ye yeven me
The same hele, I shal noon hele have.
In you lyth, whan yow list that it so be,
The day in which me clothen shal my grave.
In yow my lyf, in yow might for to save
Me from disese of alle peynes smerte;
And fare now wel, myn owene swete herte!
Le vostre T.

This lettre forth was sent unto Criseyde,
Of which hir answeere in effect was this;
ful pitously she wroot ayein, and seyde,
That also sone as that she might, ywis,
She wolde come, and mende al that was mis.
And fynally she wroot and seyde him thanne,
She wolde come, ye, but she niste whanne.

But in hir lettre made she swich festes,
That wonder was, & swereth she loveth him best,
Of which he fond but botmeles bihestes.
But Troilus, thou mayst now, est or west,
Dyke in an ivy leef, if that thee lest;
Thus gooth the world; God shilde us fro
mischance,
And every wight that meneth trouthe avaunce!

Encresen gan the wo fro day to night
Of Troilus, for tarynge of Criseyde;
And lessen gan his hope and eek his might,
for which al doun he in his bed him leyde;
He ne eet, ne dronk, ne sleep, ne word he seyde,
Imagininge ay that she was unkinde;
for which wel neigh he wex out of his minde.

This dreem, of which I told have eek biforn,
May never come out of his remembraunce;
He thoughte ay wel he hadde his lady lorn,
And that Joves, of his purveyaunce,
him shewed hadde in sleep the signifaunce
Of hir untrouthe and his disaventure,
And that the boor was shewed him in figure.

for which he for Sibille his suster sente,
That called was Cassandre eek al aboute;
And al his dreem he tolde hir er he stente,
And hir bisoughte assoilen him the doute
Of the stronge boor, with tuskes stoute;
And fynally, withinne a litel stounde,
Cassandre him gan right thus his dreem
expounde.

She gan first smyle, and seyde: O brother dere,
If thou a sooth of this desyrest knowe,
Thou most a fewe of olde stories here,
To purpos, how that fortune overthrowe
hath lordes olde; through which, withinne a
throwe,
Thou wel this boor shalt knowe, & of what kinde
he comen is, as men in bokes finde.

Diane, which that wrooth was and in ire
for Grekes nolde doon hir sacrificye,
Ne encens upon hir auter sette afyre,

She, for that Grekes gonne hir so dispysse,
Wrok hir in a wonder cruel wyse,
for with a boor as greet as oxe in stalle
She made up frete hir corn and vynes alle.

To slee this boor was al the contree reysed,
Amonges which ther com, this boor to see,
A mayde, oon of this world the best ypreysed;
And Meleagre, lord of that contree,
He lovede so this fresshe mayden free
That with his manhood, er he wolde stente,
This boor he slow, and hir the heed he sente;

Of which, as olde bokes tellen us,
Ther roos a contek and a greet envye;
And of this lord descended Tydeus
By ligne, or elles olde bokes lye;
But how this Meleagre gan to dye
Thorough his moder, wol I yow not telle,
for al to long it were for to dwelle.

Argument of the 12 Books of Statius' Thebais.
Associat profugum Tideo primus Politem;
Tidea legatum docet insidiasque secundus;
Tercius Hemoniden canit et vates latitantes;
Quartus habet reges ineuntes prelia septem;
Mox furie Lenne quinto narratur et anguis;
Archimori bustum sexto ludique leguntur;
Dat Graios Thebes et vatem septimus umbris;
Octavo cecidit Tideus, spes, vita Pelasgis;
Ypomodon nono moritur cum Parthonoepo;
fulmine percussus, decimo Capaneus superatur;
Undecimo sese perimunt per vulnera fratres;
Argivam flentem narrat duodenus et ignem.

She tolde eek how Tydeus, er she stente,
Unto the stronge citee of Thebes,
To cleyne kingdom of the citee, wente,
for his felawe, daun Polymites,
Of which the brother, daun Ethyocles,
ful wrongfully of Thebes helde the strengthe;
This tolde she by proces, al by lengthe.

She tolde eek how Hemonides asterte,
Whan Tydeus slough fifty knyghtes stoute.
She tolde eek al the prophesyes by herte,
And how that sevene kinges, with hir route,
Bisegeden the citee al aboute;
And of the holy serpent, and the welle,
And of the furies, al she gan him telle.

Of Archimoris buryinge and the pleyes,
And how Amphiorax fil through the grounde,
How Tydeus was slayn, lord of Argeyes,
And how Ypomedoun in litel stounde
Was dreynt, and deed Parthonoep of wounde;
And also how Cappaneus the proude
With thonder/dint was slayn, that cryde loude.

She gan eek telle him how that either brother,
Ethyocles and Polimye also,
At a scarmyche, eche of hem slough other,
And of Argyves wepinge and hir wo;